



Daily Reflections

January 1, 2019

Scripture

Luke 2: 16-21

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

When they saw this,
they made known the message
that had been told them about this child.

All who heard it were amazed
by what had been told them by the shepherds.

And Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.

Then the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision,
he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel
before he was conceived in the womb.

Our Scripture Reflection

Those dear shepherds are a marvelous symbol for what can happen to us in this New Year. So often with the best of intentions we make our resolutions only to find by the end of the week we have either broken them or forgotten

them altogether. We give up and its back to our old routine. The shepherds had been in their routine for periods of weeks at a time out in the fields with their flocks, that is, until the Angel came along with his amazing announcement about the birth of Baby Jesus. They went to the manger and saw that it was just as the Angel had foretold. Now, do you think it was back to shepherding as usual for them? NEVER! They were energized and renewed because they had seen Jesus. They became His witnesses and their lives would never be the same. The same can happen to us. Keep a picture of the manger in your purse, wallet, on your frig or your bedroom mirror. Every time you find yourself about to break your resolution and give up, say a prayer at the manger scene and then, stop, and do something in witness to Jesus. Happy and Blessed New Year!

Food for your Journey

It doesn't take so long for a craving to subside, be it for Winstons or gin or cupcakes. Once I got the hang of giving shopping up, it wasn't much of a trick. The trickier part was living with the startling abundance that had become glaringly obvious when I stopped trying to get more. Once I could see what I already had, and what actually mattered, I was left with a feeling that was somewhere between sickened and humbled. When did I amass so many things, and did someone else need them? If you stop thinking about what you might want, it's a whole lot easier to see what other people don't have. There's a reason that just about every religion regards material belongings as an impediment to peace. This is why Siddhartha had to leave his palace to become the Buddha. This is why Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor." It's why my friend Sister Nena, an 85-year-old Catholic nun, took a vow of poverty when she entered the convent at 18. Sister Nena was my reading teacher when I was in the first grade, and in the years since, she has taught me considerably more. When I ask her if there's anything she needs me to get for her, she shakes her head. "It's all just stuff," she says, meaning all of the things that aren't God.—Ann Patchett, "My year of no shopping," The New York Times, December 15, 2017. nytimes.com. Retrieved March 27, 2018.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, As I enter the New Year help me to experience Your precious Presence as the shepherds did many years ago. You touched their lives, even

as an infant, and they would never be the same. When I find myself down or struggling in 2019, help me to pause and remember the manger. May Your Grace give me the courage and wisdom to move forward knowing that You are with me at every turn. Amen